

MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FLORENCE COUNCIL WORK SESSION HELD ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2020, AT 5:30 P.M., IN THE FLORENCE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, LOCATED AT 775 N. MAIN STREET, FLORENCE, ARIZONA.

### **SPECIAL NOTICE REGARDING PUBLIC MEETINGS**

*Due to the risks to public health caused by the possible spread of the COVID-19 virus at public gatherings, the Town of Florence has authorized attendance through technological means. In reliance on, and in compliance with, the March 13, 2020 Opinion issued by Attorney General Mark Brnovich, and in conjunction with the Emergency Proclamation signed by Mayor Tara Walter, on March 18, 2020. The Town of Florence provides this special advance notice of the technological means through which public meetings may be accessed. Public wishing to provide comment at the meeting should contact the Town Clerk in by 5:00 p.m. the day of the meeting.*

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Mayor Walter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Tara Walter, John Anderson, Karen Wall, Kristen Larsen, Michelle Cordes,  
Absent: Judy Hughes

### **ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

For the purposes of discussions or consultations with designated representatives of the public body and/or legal counsel pursuant to A.R.S. Sections 38-431.03 (A)(3) & (4) to consider its position and instruct its representatives and/or attorneys regarding:

**Regarding the returning Stronger Grant Program.**

On motion of Councilmember Wall, seconded by Councilmember Larsen, and carried (5-0) to adjourn to Executive Session.

### **ADJOURNMENT FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On motion of Councilmember Larsen, seconded by Vice-Mayor Anderson, and carried (5-0) to adjourn from Executive Session.

### **WORK SESSION ON THE RETURNING STRONGER GRANT PHASE II.**

Mr. Benjamin Bitter, Intergovernmental and Communications Manager, provided a presentation on the review of the Returning Stronger Grant Program in which he outlined the following:

- Local Economic Support
  - In light of the heavy economic toll this pandemic has had on local businesses, Council asked Staff to propose a program to infuse money into the local economy.





Florence Town Council Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2020

Page 1 of 7

- The Returning Stronger Grant Program is a combination of Council feedback, local business feedback, best practices, and legal safeguards that will allow the Town to reimburse businesses for the measures they have undertaken to assist the Town in fulfilling its role to protect public health.
- Building Consensus
  - Staff would like to walk through each of the four categories, and proposals, to determine which ideas may be supported by the Council, and to develop a second grant program that could meet these criteria.
  - Staff will then present a final recommendation (if applicable) for Council action at the November 16<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting.
- Brick and Mortar Businesses
  - "Brick and Mortar" is defined as a standalone business, traditionally in a commercially zoned area, that holds a business license.
  - Under the Returning Stronger Grant Program, these were eligible for up to \$10,000 reimbursement for the contributions they made to assist protecting public health.
  - These included:
    - Rent (six months, from March through August)
    - Utilities (six months of water, sewer, electric charges from March through August)
    - Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and physical modification costs
- Home Based Businesses
  - Home-Based is defined as a business operated out of one's own home and is traditionally located in a residentially zoned area. These must also hold business licenses.
  - Under the Returning Stronger Grant Program, these were eligible for up to \$10,000 reimbursement for the contributions they made to assist protecting public health.
  - These included:
    - PPE and physical modification costs
- Non-Profits
  - Nonprofits are any entity holding a 501(c) status from the Internal Revenue Service. These do not traditionally hold business licenses and maintain certain tax advantages over traditional brick-and-mortar or home-based businesses.
  - Under the Returning Stronger Grant Program, these were eligible for up to \$10,000 reimbursement for the contributions they made to assist protecting public health.
  - These included:
    - PPE and physical modification costs
- Foodbanks
  - Foodbanks are often operated by nonprofits but are allowed greater flexibility for reimbursement during the pandemic, due to the community's increased reliance upon them due to the economic downturn associated with the pandemic.
  - Foodbanks received special callout for their eligibility of funding through the CARES Act.
  - Under the Returning Stronger Grant Program, these were eligible for up to \$10,000 reimbursement for the contributions they made to assist protecting public health.
  - These included:
    - Any costs associated with operating a foodbank and distributing food to the Florence community during the pandemic.
- Considerations
  - Deadline for applicants to submit their application.
  - Maximum award per applicant?

- Frequency of Audit Panel Recommendations to Town Council? (e.g., Every meeting, or in one clump at the end of the application period?).
- Specific Considerations

	Reimburse Utility ?	# of Months?	Reimburse Rent/Mortg.?	# of Months?	Reimburse PPE?	Other?
	Yes	3/1 – 12/31	Yes	3/1 – 12/31	y	
	No	n/a	No	n/a	y	
	Bldg. w/l Florence (not home) – YES	3/1 – 12/31	Bldg. w/l Florence (not home) – YES	3/1 – 12/31	y	
	Yes	3/1 – 12/31	Yes	3/1 – 12/31	y	

- Direction
  - Town Staff will adapt this recommendation to the desires of Council and present the ultimate program guidelines and application materials for Council Action at the November 16<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting.

Vice-Mayor Anderson stated that he previously suggested the program deadline be extended to March 31, 2021.

Councilmember Wall agreed with Vice-Mayor Anderson and stated that it would still remain within this fiscal year.

Councilmember Larsen inquired if this will be a new program, and if so, when would it start.

Mr. Bitter stated that it is staff's intent to bring a recommendation to the Council at the next Council meeting, per the direction provided by Council at this work session. It may be likely that the recommendation would be to start the new program at the end of the current program and to set a dollar amount. If an applicant had received funding previously, that amount would be deducted from the new cap amount.

Ms. Lisa Garcia, Deputy Town Manager/Town Clerk, asked if there is consensus to extend the date through March 31, 2021.

Mayor Walter confirmed that there is consensus to extend the deadline through March 31, 2021.

Florence Town Council Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2020

Page 3 of 7

Councilmember Larsen asked if the timeframe would remain the same for utilities or if that will be extended as well. It is her understanding that the timeframe is for six months.

Mr. Bitter confirmed that the time frame is for six months.

Vice-Mayor Anderson suggested that the timeframe remain the same.

Mr. Bitter inquired how often Council would prefer to have the applications presented to them for awards (monthly, bimonthly, or at the end of the period).

Mayor Walter asked to have the applications presented at each meeting or once per month. She would like to be proactive in awarding the funds.

Councilmember Wall stated that having the awards presented at each meeting may be an incentive to have other businesses apply.

Vice-Mayor Anderson asked if the deadline for which months they can be reimbursed for is being extended as well.

Councilmember Cordes clarified the deadlines and stated the reimbursable months will remain the same (March – August 2020), the only modification is that Council is extending the deadline to March 31, 2021 in which they can submit for reimbursement.

Mr. Bitter discussed various options and sought consensus on the following:

Should brick-and-mortar businesses receive reimbursement for utilities?

It is the Council's consensus that brick-and-mortar businesses should receive reimbursement.

Should home based businesses be reimbursed for utilities?

It is the Council's consensus that home based businesses should not receive reimbursement.

Should nonprofits be reimbursed for utilities?

It is the Council's consensus that nonprofits only receive reimbursement if they have a brick-and-mortar business and it is not their primary residence.

Florence based foodbanks can receive reimbursement for operational costs.

It is the Council's consensus that Florence based food banks can receive reimbursement for operational costs.

Councilmember Larsen inquired if non-profits would receive funding for services that they provided above-and-beyond what they normally provide.

Mr. Bitter stated that much of what they provided can be categorized as physical modifications category, that may be covered but will need to be justified as food delivery. The second phase will provide more room for a narrative and will allow for the applicant to provide more information.

Councilmember Cordes likes the idea of reimbursement for gas and time; however, food may not be reimbursable as food banks get reimbursed for food.

Mr. Bitter inquired what the deadlines will be.

Discussion occurred on when the deadline should start and end. It was the consensus of the Council that the duration be March 2020 through December 2020.

It was also the consensus of the Council that the maximum amount allowable be \$20,000, and this will include the total received from Phase I. If the applications total more than \$500,000, it will require Council approval.

Mr. Bitter stated that staff will bring forth a policy that is inclusive of all comments.

#### **ADJOURN TO A JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION WITH THE MERRILL RANCH COMMUNITY FACILITY DISTRICT NO. 1:**

**For the purposes of discussions or consultations with designated representatives of the public body and/or legal counsel pursuant to A.R.S. (a) 38-431.03 (A)(3) & (4) and in compliance with Sections 38-431.05 to consider its position and instruct its representatives and/or attorneys regarding: pending claims against the Town of Florence and Merrill Ranch Community Facility District 1 filed by Harrison Merrill.**

On motion of Councilmember Wall, seconded by Vice-Mayor Anderson, and carried (5-0) to adjourn to a Joint Executive Session with the Merrill Ranch Community Facilities District No. 1 Board.

#### **ADJOURN TO MERRILL RANCH COMMUNITY FACILITIES DISTRICT NO. 1**

On motion of Councilmember Wall, seconded by Councilmember Cordes, and carried (5-0) to adjourn to the Merrill Ranch Community Facilities District No. 1.

#### **ROLL CALL:**

Present: Tara Walter, John Anderson, Karen Wall, Kristen Larsen, Michelle Cordes

Absent: Judy Hughes

#### **ADJOURNMENT TO A JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION WITH THE FLORENCE TOWN COUNCIL**

**For the purposes of discussions or consultations with designated representatives of the public body and/or legal counsel pursuant to A.R.S. (a) 38-431.03 (A)(3) & (4) and in Florence Town Council Meeting Minutes**

November 9, 2020

Page 5 of 7



compliance with Sections 38-431.05 to consider its position and instruct its representatives and/or attorneys regarding: pending claims against the Town of Florence and Merrill Ranch Community Facility District 1 filed by Harrison Merrill.

On motion of Boardmember Cordes, seconded by Boardmember Wall, and carried (5-0) to adjourn to a Joint Executive Session with the Town of Florence Council.

**ADJOURNMENT FROM THE JOINT MERRILL RANCH COMMUNITY FACILITIES  
DISTRICT NO. 1 EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On motion of Boardmember Wall, seconded by Boardmember Cordes, and carried (5-0) to adjourn from Executive Session.

**ADJOURN FROM THE MERRILL RANCH COMMUNITY FACILITIES DISTRICT NO. 1  
MEETING**

On motion of Boardmember Cordes, seconded by Boardmember Wall, and carried (5-0) to adjourn from the Merrill Ranch Community Facilities District No. 1.

**CONTINUATION OF TOWN COUNCIL EXECUTIVE SESSION**

For the purposes of discussions or consultations with designated representatives of the public body and/or legal counsel pursuant to A.R.S. (a) 38-431.03 (A)(1) to consider its position and instruct its representatives on the Economic Development Director position.

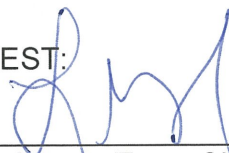
**ADJOURNMENT FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On motion of Councilmember Wall, seconded by Councilmember Larsen, and carried (5-0) to adjourn from Executive Session.

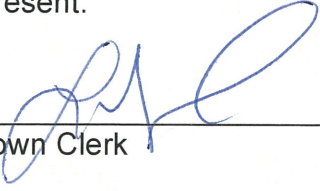
**ADJOURNMENT**

On motion of Councilmember Cordes, seconded by Vice-Mayor Anderson and carried (5-0) to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

  
Tara Walter, Mayor

ATTEST:   
Lisa Garcia, Town Clerk

I certify that the following is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Florence Town Council meeting held on November 9, 2020, and that the meeting was duly called to order and that a quorum was present.

---

Lisa Garcia, Town Clerk

